



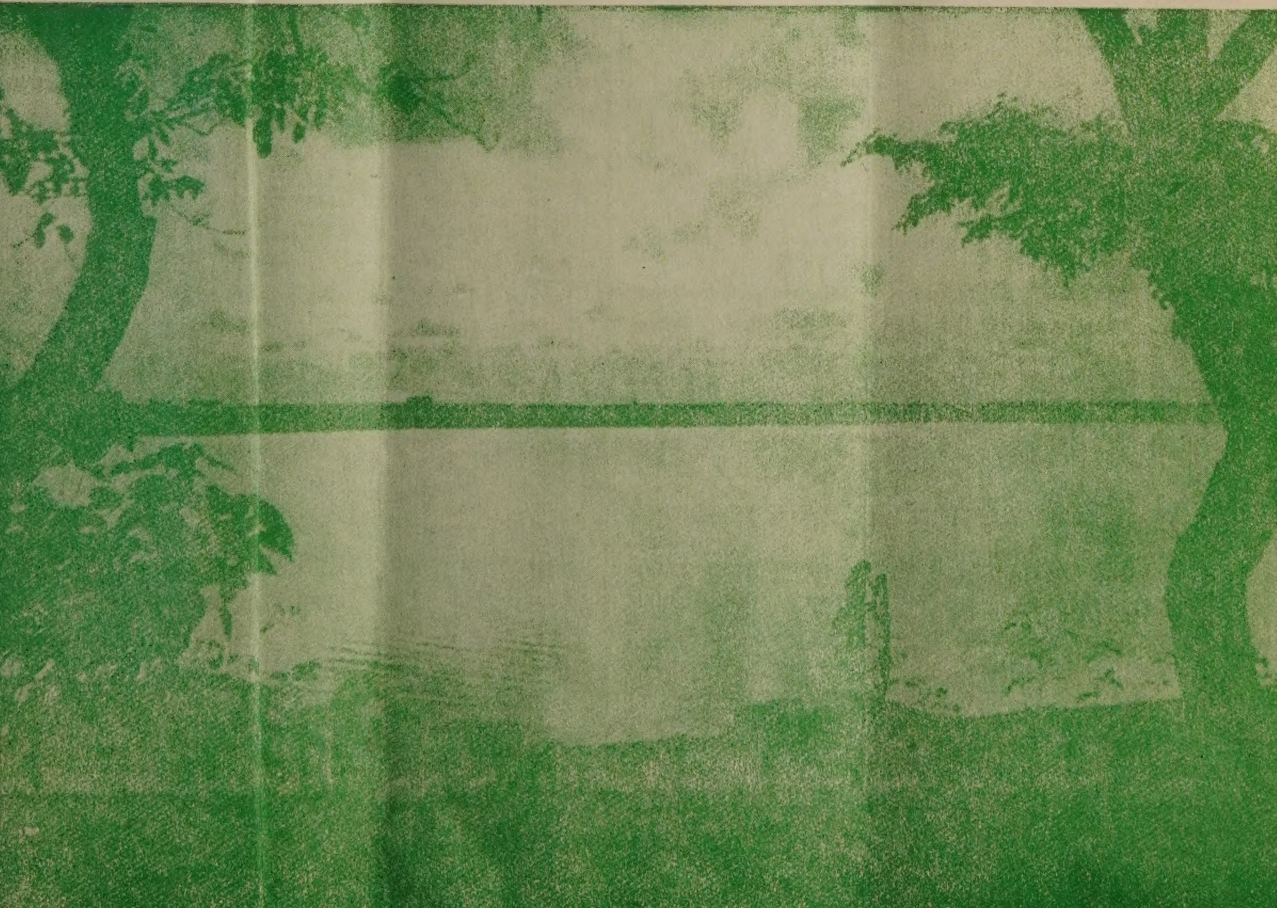
# The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

● NOVEMBER 1990

South Theological Union

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*Opinions expressed by contributors do not commit the C.S.I.*

## The South India CHURCHMAN

*The Magazine of the Church of South India*

**NOVEMBER 1990**

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## 25 Years Ago!

At the different levels of the Church's life, in the local parish in the national and international sphere of the Church's life, there is need to develop techniques and programmes of social service and action which will make a contribution towards humanizing the social and technical revolution which is taking place in all the social groups. This requires rethinking of the nature and structure of the Church's life in a changing society.

In the collapse and disintegration of the cultural patterns of the countries of the East Asia, the Christian Church has a task to provide a principle of redefinition which makes possible the reintegration and development of a cultural basis conducive to responsible living.

—Churchman 1957

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# Communalism, Vested Interests and Politics



*The recent developmens that led to a change of Govern-ment at the Centre have brought into focus very vividly the nexus that exists between Communalism, vested interests and politics in this country. The Janata Dal Government that came into power wth the support of the communal forces was ousted by the same forces in league with vested interests.*

*There may be some truth in the allegation that the decision to implement the recommendations of the Mandal Commis-sion giving reservation in Central Government jobs to a section of the people called Backward classes, was taken for political gains. But nany would like to believe that Prime Minister V. P. Singh was more sinned against than sinning. The forces of religious fundamentalism and vested interests that were unleashed against him were formidable. The agitation against the new reservation policy was masterminded by politicians who wanted to oust him as well as those who were afraid of losing some of the advantages they are njoying today. The fact cannot be denied that those who spearheaded the agitation were members of the high castes. The media people also played a dubious role. If we examine the reports of the events we can see that there was very little of impartial reporting. They were also along cate lines.*

*The agitation of the students in some of the Northern States only proved the conclusions of the Mandal Commis-*

*sion. The very fact that students were able to carry on an organised, violent agitation for several days only shows that the percentage of backward class students is very insignificant. The Ram Janmabhoomi issue was deliberately taken to extremes to coincide with the agitation against reservation because those involved in it are also people who have vested interests to protect. Thus, the Government was brought down by religious fundamentalism and entren-ched vested interests.*

*The Government fell at a time when the Christians in this country were hoping that steps would be taken to amend the Constitution in order to give to Christians of Scheduled Castes origin the privileges enjoyed by their Hindu, Sikh and Neo-Buddhist brethren. The struggle has apparently suffered a set-back but it goes on. The Moderator of the Church of South India has already written to the new Prime Minister requesting his urgent attention to this problem.*

*We have a new Government now. It is our duty to pray that the Government would be able to solve the problems the country is facing. The test of a true democracy is not whether the Government has the support of the majority in Parliament but whether the rights of the minorities are protected and whether justice is given to those who are not able to wield power and are not able to participate in the decision-making processes.*



## THE SRI LANKAN IMBROGLIO

*The events in Sri Lanka do not cause headlines these days owing to more serious developments in other parts of the world. The reports from Sri Lanka are very disturbing and the situation is worse after the departure of the Indian army. The militants and the Sri Lankan army have escalated their attacks on each other. Aerial bombardment and blockade of essential commodities make life miserable for the people living in the northern part of the island.*

*The Church of South India is deeply concerned about the situation especially because the Bishop and the people of the Jaffna diocese are passing through unimaginable hardships and also because thousands of our people have become refugees. The Jaffna diocese is involved in the care of hundreds of refugees. The Executive Committee*

*of the Synod has expressed its deep concern about the situation. It requested the World Council of Churches to send to Sri Lanka a team of eminent people to study the situation and suggest solutions. (A team from the WCC is already in Sri Lanka.) The Moderator has sent a pastoral letter to the people of the diocese assuring them of the solidarity of the rest of the Church with them in their suffering. He has also appealed to the CSI Dioceses of Tamilnadu to accord all possible assistance to the refugees who have come to India.*

*We appeal to the militants and the Sri Lankan Government to agree to a negotiated settlement of the problems. We request all the members of our Church to pray for peace in Sri Lanka and especially for the people who are passing through difficult times.*

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*(Contd. from p. 9)*

off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of two, so making peace' (Eph. 2 : 13-15).

This word has reference to the conflict between the Jews and the nations, but it could apply to all the groups in society. In Christ we can no longer define ourselves in terms of our opposing interests, our communities that exclude each other, our caste securities and the life, but only in relation to one another and as members of the household.

What do these two insights—the tension between peacemaking and trouble making and the precedence of God's reconciliation, say to the situations of intense ethnic and communal clashes?

In conclusion I would repeat

(a) a wholistic, integral vision of Shalom is the basis of our peacemaking. This is expressed beautifully by Weizacker :

No Peace without Justice

No Justice without Peace

No Justice without Freedom

No Freedom without Justice

No peace among people without peace with nature

No peace with nature without peace among people

(b) the direction for our peacemaking emerges out of the life in solidarity with the marginal and the dispossessed.

---

### Director, PAD.

The Executive Committee of the Synod that met in Mahabalipuram in October, decided to appoint the Rev. Arun Gopal as Director of the Pastoral Aid Department in the vacancy created by the resignation of the Rev. B. S. Devamani who left for the USA for higher studies. He will also be in charge of the Christian Education Department.



# Dalit Theology is Biblical and it makes the Gospel Relevant

DR. DHYANCHAND CARR, *Madurai*

## Introduction

Theology is too easily equated with doctrine and hence many orthodox Christians get confused. 'God is Creator. Christ is divine. Christ died to save sinners. Christ will judge the world. Are these not unchangeable and universal? How can these doctrines be different for the Dalits to justify a separate theology in the name of Dalit Theology? Especially when the Bible does not have any reference to the Dalits, their place or role how can we speak of Dalit Theology?...' So runs the thought of many simple minded Christians. Some who are theologically trained too argue along the same lines with the firm conviction that by so doing they defend the Gospel and the authority of the Bible. This is the pitiable situation in which the Indian Church is today. So first of all we have to help clarify the difference between theology and doctrine.

Theology to be meaningful has to be contextual and relevant. Its task is to address particular situations in the knowledge of the Christ event. In fact the Bible itself is a compendium of contextualised theologies. For example, the Apostle Paul had to wrestle with the question of the place and status of Gentile Christian believers when the prevailing assumption of the first Jewish believers had been that the Gospel was to be preached only to the Jewish people scattered among the nations. This is how they had interpreted our Lord's command to take the Gospel to the end of the world. When he had succeeded in giving the Gentile believers their legitimate place then he had to deal with the question of the Jewish people who had rejected the Gospel. Do they still retain their election or have they forfeited it? Paul comes to the conclusion that the Jews still remain as God's chosen people in spite of the fact many among them had rejected the Gospel. In fact it was their refusal to accept our Lord as the anointed Messiah that gave the impetus to the Gentile Mission. Paul makes this historical contingency a relevant datum for theology. Jesus the Son of God died to save the sinful mankind is a generalised conceptual statement. This is doctrine. But applying this truth to the particular situation when the Gospel is understood and interpreted in the context of a Zionist interpretation and conversely applying the same doctrine to challenge the antisemitic tendencies is the task of theology. So theology can only be contextual.

Now coming more specifically to the question of Dalit Theology we need to clear certain misunderstandings at the very outset.

Dalit Theology rightly understood is not communal. It does not seek to promote the liberation of the Dalits alone thereby putting the non-Dalits outside the pale of salvation. Rather, it does seek to challenge the tendency to legitimise caste oppression of the Dalits but at the same

time seek to include all the really converted non-Dalits within its purview. As to how exactly this is done is worked out in the exposition of Matthew's Gospel from which a base for doing Dalit Theology has been created in this paper. Secondly Dalit theology is not concerned purely with Christian Dalits but with all Dalits of India.

Some who have accepted liberation theology also have misgivings about Dalit Theology. They ask, 'Is not the Dalit problem an aspect of the problem of oppression? Will not the problem disappear with the removal of structures of oppression which are sustained by unjust economic structures? The simple answer is 'no'. This is because we can speak of oppression and exploitation in a fluid manner. The question 'Who are the oppressors?' can be raised without implicating the educated middle class Christians who articulate Liberation Theology in India.

For while we may concede readily that we participate in the benefits of an oppressive structure, we can also conveniently excuse ourselves as conscientised Christians who oppose those structures. With regard to the Dalit question, however, it is otherwise. Our identities as Dalits and non-Dalits are clearly fixed. Further, most non-Dalits presently belonging to the educated middle class have been direct beneficiaries (and not just indirect beneficiaries of structures) of nepotistic favouritism by their fellow caste-persons in power. This is why even those who are protagonists of Liberation Theology fight shy of Dalit Theology because it puts them on the spot and demands a personal response.

Finally, a word about the use of Matthew's Gospel for working out a base for Dalit Theology. We do not by any means claim that the Matthaean emphasis on Galilee provides an exhaustive paradigm for Dalit Theology. However, the programmatic way in which Matthew portrays Jesus' Messiahship in terms of his designation as Nazarene and in terms of Jesus' choice of Galilee seems to this author as providing a most thorough model for Dalit Theology.

## The Matthaean Redaction

Matthew's Gospel got written as a result of three contextual constraints. They are:

- (i) The Jew-Gentile complexion of the Matthaean community was continuing to produce tensions within the community. The status of Gentile believers within a Christian community which also included within it some Jewish believers had not yet been fully resolved.
- (ii) A definite move back to 'The Galilean' as a way of solving allegations of antinomianism and libertinism.



nism arising out of a prevalent misunderstanding of Paul.

- (iii) The apologetic need to offer a satisfactory answer to the pertinent question raised by the Jewish community 'If Jesus was the Messiah then why did He not gather up the scattered Jews and lead them back to the homeland?'

A combination of the above contextual needs along with a few other Christological motifs determined the redactional framework of Matthew's Gospel.

The question relating to Matthew's relationship to Mark and whether or not a Gentile Redactor utilised an Aramaic Hebrew original or not will be seen to become not so important after all. The framework outlined will show that the Gospel of Matthew coheres as a well-knit unit and so there is very little need for postulating a later redactor to have imposed a new perspective on a differently oriented original. I mention this at the very outset because I shall be suggesting 'coherence' as an useful criterion to test the validity of any interpretation.

Among the three contextual motivating factors which prompted the worthy of the Gospel of Matthew, the last mentioned one namely the need to explain why Jesus did not accomplish an in-gathering of the scattered Jewish people and still could be acclaimed as the Messiah, was, perhaps, the most powerful catalyst in crystallising the overall Matthaean perspective resulting in portraying Jesus as the Shepherd-King who gathered together the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel namely, the Galilean people, the tax-gatherers and prostitutes, the blind and the lame, the leprosy-stricken, etc., who are also described collectively as the 'Poor in Spirit'. That is to say, that Jesus gathered together and gave community status to all those whose human dignity had been plundered. They are the poor in spirit and they are the lost sheep of the house of Israel and they are the new ethnics (21:43) which will bring forth the fruits of the Kingdom.

Let us now see how Matthew unfolds his programme step by step.

As has already been stated the Jew-Gentile tension was another ingredient in helping the Matthaean motif taking a clear shape. The early chapters, therefore, provide a blend of the two motifs namely Jesus the shepherd King who gathers together the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel and Jesus the divine Son of God for all the Nations.

This double purpose is achieved through a careful handling of the genealogy, the visit of the Wise Men from the East, the fleeing into Egypt and return to Nazareth together with a summary of the teaching of John the Baptist.

Matthew appears to be Jewish satisfying Jewish sentiments while at the same time subversively planting powerful explosives to blast away all claims to Jewish particularity.

The apparent purpose of the genealogy is to present Jesus as the legitimate heir of the family of David within the chosen descendants of Abraham. The mention of the four Gentile women in the genealogy, however, of Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and the wife of Uriah bears a clear hint that the Jewish people cannot afford to boast about a pedigree descent. Yet an even more daring suggestion

present is that God seems specially to go out and choose children born of 'irregular' relationships. This is precisely why Bathsheba is not mentioned by name but referred to as the wife of Uriah. Therefore, Matthew seems to say that the 5th irregular Son Jesus has every right to be designated 'Son of David' in spite of a mixture of Gentile and 'Son of God'. Thus Mary tops the list of the poor in spirit who became the vehicle of the Holy Spirit to transport the Son of God from heaven to earth. So in the genealogy itself we see Matthew's double purpose of demolishing Jewish particularity and of defining the Poor in Spirit clearly. This 'illegitimate child' made legal heir because of a divine Origin and adoption into the mixed family of David is worshipped by the Wise Men from the East. The point is further sharpened through an ivory. Whereas the knowledge of the Scribes that the one destined to shepherd Israel would be born in Bethlehem serves only to give birth to a conspiracy to eliminate him.

The fleeing into Egypt also is made to serve a double purpose. In Jesus' life is repeated the experience of the slavery of Egypt and the Exile. Hosea 11:1 'Out of Egypt have I called my Son' and Jer. 31:15 f... 'Rachel is weeping for her children...' are effectively used for this purpose. But the fact that non-Jewish Wise Men helped in the escape, Egypt served as a place of refuge and not of slavery and the culminating point that the 'Galilee of the Gentiles' (cf. Isa. 9:1 and Matt. 4:15 f) becomes his home serve to remind all readers at the very outset that Jesus has had a better reception among the non-Jewish people than among his own people. The warning of John the Baptist (3:8) that God is able to make children for Abraham out of stones clinches the argument.

It is not the Jewish people as such who are the real heirs of the Kingdom. The Kingdom is to be taken away from the exclusively ethnically conscious Jews and given to 'another nation' (21:43) (which in fact will not be a nation at all in strict ethnic terms) to be newly constituted out of the rejects of Society with the stone rejected by builders becoming the Chief Corner Stones. Through such a radical reversal the poor in spirit are made heirs of the Kingdom.

A clear hint to this Messianic task of rendering justice to the poor by slaying of the wicked (Is. 11:4 & 5) is made in 2:23 when Jesus' sojourn in Nazareth resulting in the emergence of the name Nazarene is referred to as fulfilment of an uncited (and non-existent) prophecy. It is well known that no such prophecy exists. The possible allusion to Samson fails to fit Jesus as our Lord was known for his enjoyment of wine, a definite taboo for everyone bound by the Nazarite vow. Therefore, the only possible allusion could be to NEZER of Isa. 11:1, the shoot from the stump of Jesse. If this is correct then Jesus is shown as the Messiah, who is filled by the Spirit and renders justice to the poor and brings about a cosmic reconciliation. Interestingly, the mission of rendering justice to the poor and effecting cosmic reconciliation is achieved first through Jesus' sojourn in Nazareth and then by conducting his mission from another station in Capernaum also within Galilee.

Isa. 9:1 is cited as being fulfilled in the ministry that is carried out with Capernaum as the base because Galilee is referred to as Galilee of the Gentiles.

Matthew seems to want to suggest two things. First that it is the people of Galilee who are the people who are in darkness and who see the great light.



Second, Matthew's attention seems to be to argue that it was not necessary for Jesus to have crossed the boundaries of Palestine in order to work among those scattered in the 'nations'. Jesus, work in Galilee itself serves that purpose as Galilee is referred to as the Galilee of the Gentiles.

We are, however, more interested in the allusive equation drawn between the people of Galilee and the poor who are rendered justice through describing Jesus as the Nezer by virtue of his sojourn in Nazareth. Along with the people of Galilee who followed Jesus is to be reckoned all those people who were healed (11 : 2-5 and 19 : 1-2) together with the socially handicapped group of tax-gatherers and prostitutes. The purpose of listing Mary as the 5th woman in the genealogy in a line of women who are unacceptable to Jewish sentiments in one way or the other and of referring to Matthew the tax collector included in the call narrative serve as symbolic representatives of this last mentioned socially handicapped persons who enter the Kingdom before everybody else (21 : 31).

It now becomes easy for us to understand the significance of the phrase 'Poor in Spirit' in Matt. 5 : 3. The traditional interpretation which even today holds sway is that 'the poor in spirit' are the humble in disposition. Therefore, even if a rich person were to cultivate and exhibit a humble disposition he or she would be eligible for the Kingdom. Matthew is thus seen to have toned down the harshness of 'Blessed are you poor for yours is the Kingdom...' the probable original 'Q' version of the saying. While it is true that the category 'poor in spirit' is a more inclusive one in that it includes within it the economically exploited and the socially handicapped it is by no means a spiritualised version of the word poor. Rather, it refers to the destitution of the spirit consequent upon the loss to human dignity and freedom arising from being marginalised, ostracised or stigmatised in one way or the other. This seems to be the meaning from examining the biblical references which speak of the spirit as a divine endowment given to the human race (e.g. Isa. 42 : 7).

If this is granted, then we are now in a position to ask, 'Who are the "Lost Sheep of the House of Israel"?'

At the very outset it was mentioned that the most powerful catalyst in crystalising the Matthaean shape of the Gospel was the question 'If Jesus were the Messiah why then did he not gather together the harassed and scattered sheep (Micah 4 : 6 & 7) i.e. people of the Diaspora?'

Matthew's answer to this question simply is that the really lost sheep of the house of Israel are not the ones who are well settled in the Diaspora. Rather, the exploited poor, the despised Galileans, the ostracised physically handicapped and the stigmatised tax-gatherers and the prostitutes are the groups which constitute the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Therefore, in as much as Jesus fully engaged in gathering together such people and in as much as it was the Galileans and those healed by him (19 : 1-2) who went all the way from Galilee to Jerusalem and remained faithful to him (especially the Galilean women) they are those who are now gathered together to constitute the new ethnos, the new messianic community commissioned to continue the same in-gathering work

through the proclamation of the Gospel to all the nations. They become the paradigm of the sheep-fold of the Shepherd King gathered out of the harassed and helpless sheep without a shepherd (9 : 36).

This argument is further strengthened when we take note of the fact that the risen Lord appears only to the Galilean women in Jerusalem (28 : 10) and then appears to all the disciples back in Galilee only. Matthew makes no mention of any Jerusalem appearances to the disciples. 'I will go before you to Galilee...' (26 : 31, 32), 'He goes before you to Galilee (28 : 7) and'... there I will meet them (28 : 10).

It is clear therefore when we are reminded that Jesus has compassion on the Galilean crowds as they were like sheep without a shepherd in 9 : 36, when he directs the disciples to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel who is really meant (10 : 5 & 6).

The prohibition to enter the Samaritan homes and Gentile homes is meant to be understood as of a temporary nature. The Messianic community constituted out of the lost sheep of Israel i.e. the exploited, marginalised, ostracised and stigmatised groups, that messianic community will become the New Ethnos first and will eventually take within its fold similar people from other societies of the world. All this clearly demonstrates that Matthew's interest in the Jewish people is only apparent and not real.

### The implications of Matthaean Redactional Perspective for Dalit Theology

We now turn to the task of interpreting the relevance of Matthew's Gospel for the Dalits in India.<sup>1</sup>

#### (i) *The Dalits and Galileans*

The above framework can be discerned through academic work. But its application can only be discerned through actual knowledge of the Dalit situation and out of a motivation to see the Dalit people as a people destined to become the Messianic community, the community of salvation for all people of India.

The Dalits are an oppressed, ostracised and stigmatised ground. Their labour is exploited, their women are abused and they are deemed untouchable. They are the poor in spirit for their human dignity and freedom get plundered. They are like sheep without a shepherd harassed and scattered as their culture has been subjugated by imposing alien religious and cultural values.

The Jesus community, the community of the Shepherd-King as we have seen was first paradigmatically formed out of the despised Galileans together with other smaller groups of despirited people.

Let us look at the way in which sentiments about Galilee had taken roots during the first century.

It is clear that even guileless Israelites of the southern origin had instilled into them a deep prejudice about Galilee (e.g. Nathanael in John's Gospel). The Sanhedrin

<sup>1</sup> We do not want to convey the impression that Matthaean redaction is applicable only to the Dalit situation. But in so far as Matthew has indicated that those socially ostracised and handicapped are to be regarded as 'the lost sheep' and 'the poor in spirit', we see an appropriate application of the Matthaean perspective to the Dalit context in India.

<sup>1</sup> Origen's Latin Commentary on Romans Ch. 8 makes a reference to the then current Jewish objection to the proclamation of Jesus as the Messiah. They asked why Isa. 45 : 13 had not been fulfilled.



collectively decides to indict Jesus without a proper trial just because he was a Galilean. They mockingly ask Nicodemus 'Are you also a Galilean?' (Jn. 7:51 f). The book of Acts also reflects the same sentiment when the disciples Peter and John are referred to as IOLOTMS by the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:13).

What are the sources of this irrational but clearly culturally conditioned prejudice? There may have been several cumulative causes. First, we take note of the fact that Galilee was the land assigned to the tribes of Zebulun and Naphthali. In spite of the fact that both these tribes are highly praised in the song of Deborah the Deuteronomic Tradition deems them as cursed (Deut. 27:13). While Naphthali was perhaps deemed as cursed because his mother was a slave woman it is difficult to find why Zebulun was also considered as deserving to be designated as cursed. Similarly the Dalit people notwithstanding their real merits are deemed as a cursed people due to irrational prejudices whose origins are difficult to locate.

The second probable reason for the deeply ingrained prejudice was perhaps due to an assumption on the part of the orthodox southerners that the Galileans had easily compromised their culture and had accepted certain Gentile cultural modes. (Isa. 9:1) refers to Galilee as Galilee of the Gentiles perhaps because Galilee, falling within the Fortile Crescent, had been situated on the trade route between Assyria and Egypt. Perhaps some Gentile settlements had been established because of this.

Yet a third reason could be, in the judgement of the southern Jews, the religion of the people of Galilee was not orthodox enough. Zealotism which originated in Galilee had a zealous religious base. But the southern Jews had learnt to spurn the religion of the Galileans. So too we can find umpteen examples of dominating Hindu religion disparaging the folk religion of the Dalit people. Although orthodox Hinduism could be shown to exhibit legitimising tendencies providing religious sanction for patriarchy, exploitative trade, the hierarchy of the caste structure... etc., and conversely the religion of the Dalits could be seen to contain many liberative aspects, allowing women to act as priests and prophetesses emphasising a culture of sharing... etc. In as much as the religious power rests in the hands of the dominant forces it is inevitable they would create adverse prejudices without just causes against the religion of the dominated (i.e. the Dalits).

## (ii) *The Dalits understood as 'the Lost Sheep'...*

The lost sheep paradigm also lends itself as a base for theological reflection on the Dalits.

The constitution of India provides for positive discrimination towards the Dalits to off set the results of millenia old practices which crush the Dalits from enjoying legitimate human dignity. This privilege given to the Dalits, however, is deeply resented and vehemently opposed by non-Dalits. We have begun to see many communal riots springing up as a result of this resentment. Is there a theological solution to this problem? Matthew's Gospel seems to address this question for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

The episode of the Canaanite woman seeking the Lord's help for healing her possessed daughter provides a beautiful paradigm (15:21-27).

The Matthaean redaction of the story is significant. First, the woman is referred to as a Canaanite and not simply as a Syro-Phoenician-Greek as in the Marcan parallel. The designation Canaanite, although basically does have an ethnic connotation seems however, to have semantically acquired a new meaning. Zech. 14:21 looks forward to a time when there will no more be a canaanite merchant within the Temple. The Zealots had come to be referred to as Canaanites (Could we say because of their Fascist leaning pardon my anachronism). Therefore, it is highly probable that Matthew wanted to point to the powerful position in which the woman was when compared with the underprivileged people about whom Jesus was mostly concerned.

Interestingly, therefore, in spite of the Canaanite woman hailing Jesus as 'Son of David' Jesus does not say a word to her but tells his disciples that his priorities were different. Listening to this argument between Jesus and the disciples championing her cause the woman intervenes to say 'Yes Lord. But at least the pups could have the spill overs from the table of the children'. This intervention of the woman conceding the legitimacy of prioritising the lost sheep and expressive of a willingness to be satisfied by the spill overs draws the commendation from the Lord and her request is granted.

Let us recall that Capitalism deliberately talks about the spill over benefits reaching the poor when the cup of the capitalist runs over. It is the same with regard to the caste system. People who deem themselves to belong to a higher caste assume that the Dalits are to survive by their benevolence and that they should not claim anything as theirs by right. According to Jesus, however, it is the heretofore dominant and the powerful who have to learn to concede that it is right for God to have a preferential option towards the poor and to be prepared to be satisfied by the crumbs that fall from the children's table. Therefore, applying this principle with special reference to Dalits, all non-Dalits, who are so willing, can of course be commended for their faith and be included within the household of the Dalits, if they willingly concede that it is right to treat the Dalits preferentially.

If our earlier conclusion that Matthew saw in the name Nazarene, a fulfilment of Isa. 11:1 was correct then that conclusion also supports this application of Matt. 15:21-27 to the Dalit situation. For, in Isa. 11:6-10, we have a vision of the predatory beasts giving up their predatory habits and accepting the humble food of sheep and cattle. Isa. 11:6 then could be seen as a dream of the prophet in which the lamb becomes able to host the converted and transformed wolf within its dwellings. A situation very similar to the one dramatised in this episode when a woman belonging to a rich and powerful canaanite group expresses her willingness to be treated as a dog in a household fed by the left overs from the table of the children who are the scattered and harassed people of her contemporary society.

For our purpose of identifying the relationship between academic study and people oriented interpretation it is necessary to take a brief note of how this Particular episode is traditionally treated by interpreters.

First, personally, I can recall the acute embarrassment with which I used to handle this episode in my classes on the Synoptic Gospels during the first phase of my teaching career. Given a conservative temperament and a profoundly Orthodox Christology, it was embarrassing



to face a Jesus who, apparently, could not transcend his Jewish exclusivism and pride. So, in order to lessen the embarrassment I used to indulge in all sorts of apologetic gymnastics. 'Perhaps Jesus was indulging in a little humour;' 'Perhaps he wanted to bring out into the open the depth of the woman's faith of which he had prior knowledge, with the express purpose of challenging his own disciples...' etc. . . .

Modern Commentators, however, have found a different way out. 'Should we look for perfection in Jesus?' If Jesus was born as a real man and was brought up in a Jewish cultural milieu it is proper for us to expect him to have exhibited a total transcendence which would make us doubt the reality of the incarnation? . . .

Yet others see the episode as one which relativises the title Son of David to the preferred title 'Lord'. It is only when the woman learns to address Jesus as 'Lord' is he shown to respond by commending her faith and granting her request. One need not labour to show that Matthew is very fond of the title Son of David and so this explanation will not wash.

All those who try to seek an explanation from a theology of incarnation or purely from a study of Matthew's way of handling the titles of Jesus are bound to miss the point. The explosive relevance of the episode could only be seen from a real awareness of the continuous processes of scattering and oppression and from the point of view of a firm conviction that God in Jesus has set in motion the reverse process. Can we say also that only those interpretations based on an acceptance of God's bias towards the scattered and harassed would be valid for only such interpretations cohere with the original intent of Matthew?

I may be permitted to add that this interpretation has helped enhance my conservative belief in the divine co-authorship of scripture and in the incarnate Son who exhibited an unique transcendence, i.e. transcendence over culturally conditioned inhibitions.

It is therefore clear that Matthew provides the most comprehensive model for Dalit Theology. For it affirms God's bias towards the socially ostracised and stigmatized groups, it proclaims that the Messianic Community entrusted with the responsibility to take the Gospel to all is constituted out of such scattered and harassed people. Matthew's Gospel also points to the way in which those who have hitherto enjoyed the benefits of belonging to the privileged sections of society can deliberately and willingly take the second place thus getting God's approval. It is hoped therefore that the Church will be invigorated by listening to what Matthew has to say.

In conclusion we must raise one last question. 'Do we therefore legitimise all Dalit Christian Caste Associations?' No caste association whether for Dalits or non-Dalits is legitimate in the light of the Gospel. A truly Dalit Christian organisation will transcend sub-caste loyalties and will be imbued by a sense of Messianic vocation. Today however caste associations are formed purely to safeguard the rights of its members. Therefore, we do hope and pray that this paper will inspire the formation of a truly integrated Christian Dalit organisation which will allow and welcome the participation of non-Dalit Christians and will seek to struggle for the liberation of all Dalits with the specific goal of building a human community totally devoid of all walks of separation and all hierarchical structures of authority. Working towards this goal demands that we work on the basis of Dalit Theology.

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# PEACE

DR. K. C. ABRAHAM, Bangalore

*Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall be called Children of God. Matt. 5:9*

The creator of a new heaven and a earth calls us to become peacemakers in a world that is being destroyed by violence and greed. Ethnic violence dismember the body politic, and religious differences give rise to volcanic eruptions, resulting in massive killings. Economic exploitation amounting to destitution and misery for millions is escalating. There is mounting hostility to and marginalization of lower castes—tribals, indigenous peoples, workers and women. The new configuration of world powers and the failure of socialist systems have increased the opportunity for global exploitation.

In the face of these, the peacemaking is a hopeless task. By and large, our churches in Asia are mere spectators incapable of responding to these situations of violence and oppression. Many of them are divided among themselves and preoccupied with narrow communal or group interests. We have lost our moral credibility to be peacemakers in God's world. How can we be inspired of a new vision for peacemaking? How do we find means or patterns of Christian life and practice that are faithful to the call for peacemaking in an increasingly violent and divided world? The vision for peacemaking and strategy for peacemaking are our concerns in the Biblical reflection.

Biblical vision for peacemaking is necessarily rooted in the vision of peace, Shalom. There are several poetic expressions of it. (Isa. 2:1-4, 9:2-7, 11:1-9, 32:9-14; Ezek. 34:23-31, 37:24-28; Zech. 9:18. Ps. 85:8-13, 122:6-9). Let us listen to one of them.

Behold, a king will reign in righteousness,  
and princes will rule in justice.  
Each will be like a hiding place from the wind,  
a covert from the tempest,  
like streams of water in a dry place,  
like the shade of a great rock in a weary land.  
Then the eyes of those who see will not be closed,  
and the ears of those who hear will hearken.  
The mind of the rash will have good judgement,  
and the tongue of the stammerers  
will speak readily and distinctly.  
For the palace will be forsaken,  
the populous city deserted;  
the hill and the watch tower  
will become dens for ever,  
a joy of wild asses,  
a pasture of flocks;  
until the spirit is poured upon us from on high,  
and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field,  
and the fruitful field is deemed a forest.  
Then justice will dwell in the wilderness,  
and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.  
And the effect of righteousness will be peace,  
and the result of righteousness,  
quietness and trust for ever.  
My people will abide in a peaceful habitation,  
in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

Isa. 32:1-4, 14-18

One may read this passage along with other passages in Isaiah Ch. 35, 65:17-25. The impact of this poetry is clear. Shalom is not defined in abstract terms or by theatrical propositions. It is a Utopian vision—It is a vision of wholeness, of harmony or relationships.

## 1. Peace and Life

The generic term that comes closer is *life*. As prophet Malachi says, God's covenant is 'a covenant of life and peace' (2:5). The affirming of vision of Shalom in these passages is a way of celebrating God's gift of life. The essential character of this life, which the human beings share among themselves and with nature is inter-relatedness.

'The realisation of life, in all its fullness, including the material basis of life, is the primary mediation of the approach to God' (Sobrinho, *Ephphany*, p. 70). God and God of life gives a 'primary and generic horizon' to our faith. The 'generic horizon' is common to all humanity and not an exclusive domain of the people of a particular faith. It takes us to the very root, the earth-base, of our experience.

To affirm this link between the God of peace and God of life is important for our context. For in many Asian languages the word 'peace' (e.g. 'Shanti') does not convey a dynamic or all-embracing meaning. But the word 'life' (e.g. Jiva) does.

None of this emphasis on life is lost in the New Testament. The word *eirēne* has absorbed the meanings of *shalom*. Compare Gen. 37:4 with 2 Cor. 13:11, or Gen. 43:27-28 with Mk. 5:34. There is however, a difference. In New Testament God's peace-giving life is linked with Jesus. 'He is our peace' Eph. 2:14. But his message and ministry includes the full dimension of a truly human life. Lk. 4:18-19 and Matt. 11:2-10. The generic horizon of life becomes concretized and historicized in the life of Jesus himself, especially in his solidarity with the suffering. The Kingdom which Jesus preaches is the Kingdom of those who are deprived of life.

What are the implications of this affirmation in connection with peace and life for our peacemaking?

From dowry deaths to nuclear disasters one could draw up a long list of violence we commit to one another and to nature. Our tendency to reduce these to sin and selfishness is often an abstraction. In modern world, sin and selfishness assume corporate and structural character. Greed is a personal sin but is operative in organised form in our economic system. Caste oppression cannot be simply reduced to 'personal' factors. Caste structure, like other evil structures, has a logic of its own. That is why our faith in God of life has to be expressed as affirming



values, practices and institutions that affirm and enhance life and as denouncing the systems and structures that 'diminish and extinguish the lives of so many'.

('Voices', 91)

## 2. Peace is liberation for creation

The link between peace and life takes us to affirm our responsibility for earth, liberation as well. Again Biblical testimony is clear. The struggle of the people of Israel for the political liberation is also a struggle to possess land, which is based on the faith of God's sovereignty over the earth (Ex. 9 : 29).

The revelation of Yahweh, for Moses, begins with the realization that the place on which he is standing is holy ground (Ex. 3 : 5). The plane of human history and nature can never be set in opposition as we seem to be doing in some of our interpretations. They are held together in the Biblical witness of faith (Psalm 19, Isaiah 37 : 30-32 ; 42 : 5-9, and many other 'servant' passages).

In the New Testament, Christ's work of redemption extends to the whole universe. Christ, the Lord of history, initiates a process of transformation that moves toward the cosmic release (Ephesians 1 : 1-10) and Colossians 1 : 15-20). The unity between the hope for inward liberation of the children of God and the liberation of the entire physical creation from its bondage and oppression is the theme of the Romans' passage. The work of the Spirit is to renew the fall of the earth. *Ktisis*, translated as 'creation' means not only women and men, but all created things including demonic powers. It is in the search for liberation of all aspects of human life, histories, cultures, and natural environment that we can truly affirm that salvation is the wholeness of creation.

The liberation in Exodus is linked with the cry of the oppressed, and in Romans 8 : 18-30 the glorious liberty is in response to the groans and travails within us and in the creation. God has heard the cry of the poor and God is taking sides with them. This message of the Exodus story, reiterated in the prophetic faith, is all pervasive. God's history is not the history of the kings and armies. God's history is in the events and the relationships shaped by the weak and the marginalized. In the same way the renewal of the earth comes in response to the cry of the poor and of the 'dumb' creatures, and of the silent nature. It is interesting to note that when God decided to spare Nineveh in the Book of Jonah (4 : 11) it was out of God's pity for the 'more than 120,000 persons (reference to is babies) who do not know their right hand from their left and also much cattle'. God was not interested in preserving the great city for the sake of its skyscrapers, supermarkets and giant computers !

We are committed to a vision of human wholeness which includes not only our relationship with one another, but also our relationship vis-a-vis nature and the universe. We are also committed to the struggles for transformation of the poor, the weak, and the disfigured and the over exploited nature. Both are decisive for our peacemaking. The interconnectedness between commitment of the renewal of society and the renewal of the earth is clearly seen in the struggles of many marginalised groups in Asia. Indigenous people, tribals and other groups who have been traditionally dependent upon the land and the sea—these are small farmers, fisherfolk, agriculture labourers, have kept these two dimensions together in their movements of liberation. They raise questions to the

patterns of economic development and the kind of technology we use as well as the life-style we adopt uncritically. Today decisions in these are shaped by the forces of a consumerist economy where the controlling logic of growth is greed and not need. Who speaks for the 'dumb creatures' and babies? Who listens to the groaning and travail of the earth? How do we integrate ecological concerns in our peacemaking?

## 3. Peace and Justice

The God of peace, the God of life orients the struggle of his people in a precise direction toward the establishment of justice. In Hebrew faith, Yahweh has established a covenant with his people for peaceful life. The clear expressions of that relationship is justice. It is in justice done to the weak and helpless that Israel finds true peace. Please see the background paper on this theme. There is no peace without justice. This integral relation between peace and justice should inform all our peacemaking activity.

## 4. Peace is life in Community

From the very beginning Shalom is a social and personal reality which brings the whole common life to a new fruition. The integrity of a community is important but it has to constantly be open to the demands and challenges of the wider human community. Although the Bible projects this vision of Shalom in community, it shows that this shalom is far from real. Shalom within a community and between communities is thwarted by individuals and groups that make alliances of power to dominate others. Therefore in the Bible, peace is set against false peace (Jer. 6 : 14, 8 : 15). The peace which we make ourselves is always a partial peace—a peace including some people at the cost of others. This peace the Biblical Yahweh confronts with his sword of judgement. 'I have not come', said Jesus, 'to bring peace but a sword' (Mat. 10 : 33). This is still the dynamics of divine peacemaking. *The action of God creates conflicts in the name of peace wherever structures of law and order have come to dominate human beings.* It uncovers the violence that is beneath the structures of false peace. This is why in the Bible the God's messengers, peacemakers, become also trouble makers. Examples are agalore. The Hebrew midwives' resistance to Pharaoh saves Moses ; Moses himself opposed the King, people who resisted the imposition of unjust laws by Solomon, prophets who entered into 'fierce battle with the rulers' and so on.

Of course the conflict generated is important but conflict is not the ultimate word. There is a commitment to the obligations to life together.

Finally, we affirm that the ground of peace in this world is God's reconciliation of the world in Jesus Christ. There is a sense in which this reconciliation precedes all our consciousness of it. The power of Christ is greater than our sin and has conquered it. The new reality is there and offered to us in his calling. But it is precisely this new reality which makes us aware of our divisions and of the false pretensions of the system of peace we have established. Only when we have confronted our neighbour, no longer within a framework which lets us explain him away, but in all of God's promises for his peace even when they conflict with what we think is ours, and in all his claims on us, does reconciliation gain its proper urgency. 'Now in Christ Jesus you who once were far

(Continued on p. 2)



# “As the Father was sent me, ever so I send you”

DR. RUSSEL CHANDRAN, *Bangalore*

I believe that through these words spoken by our Risen Lord to his disciples we can hear the message of God today both to Sam Amirtham and to this congregation representing the South Kerala Diocese and the CSI Synod.

There are many things in the background of Sam Amirtham which makes him eminently qualified for the office of the Bishop. He had practical experience in a local congregation at grass-root level. After gaining advanced theological scholarship from India as well as from Europe he served as a theological educator for many years equipping men and women for the ministry. Bishop Lesslie Newbigin has described his contribution at Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary as ‘inspired leadership’ which produced ‘a kind of ministerial training which was more truly appropriate to a missionary Church than anything I have known before or since’. As Director of the W.C.C.’s Programme on Theological Education he not only gained an ecumenical and global perspective of the Church’s mission and ministry but also contributed to the renewal of theological education in many parts of the world. We may say that God has specially prepared him for the high calling of the Bishop of the Church. But what matters above all is God’s action in Jesus Christ. Whatever be the means by which Sam Amirtham was appointed as bishop of this diocese we believe that it was God who has called him to be the bishop of this diocese. When we acknowledge this let us listen to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ who says, ‘As the Father has sent me, even so I send you’. God chooses and sends people for fulfilling different tasks he has for his mission. We may recall the ministries of many who had laboured as servants of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in this diocese. Of special importance is the heritage of those who had served in the episcopal office. It is good to recall at this time the faithful ministries of those who had served in this area even before the inauguration of the Church of South India. I remember the ministries of Rev. John A. Jacob and Rev. Paul Nesamony. After the coming of the C.S.I. this diocese had the services Bishop Legg, Bishop William and Bishop Jesudason. All of them have built up a rich heritage of Christian ministry which can be a source of inspiration for Sam Amirtham. But above all it is through what the Holy Spirit teaches us about Jesus Christ that one learns how to exercise the office of the Bishop.

Reflecting on Jesus’ words, ‘As the Father has sent me’ I would like to draw attention to three important dimensions of the mission of God which Jesus Christ has made known to us and in which we are called to participate.

First, our Lord Jesus Christ came to us taking the form of a servant. He categorically told his disciples that he came not to be served but to serve (Mark 10: 45). He never exercised any magisterial authority. He washed

his disciples’ feet and told them that they were to follow the same example and it was by the way they served one another in love that they would be known as his disciples. According to the Gospel of John it was in his suffering and death on the Cross that God’s glory was manifested. Apostle Paul also affirms in his epistle to the Philippians that Jesus had ‘emptied himself’ and taken the form of a servant, had humbled himself, and become obedient unto death, even death on a cross. (Phil. 2: 5-8). Those called to the office of the bishop are, therefore expected to promote this image of servanthood of the ministry of the Church. However, over the centuries through the Church’s link with secular authority, from the time of Emperor Constantine onwards, the episcopal office has been associated with concepts and symbols of status, magisterial authority and power. The Bishop’s vestments including mitre and cope, the description of the Bishop as a prince of the Church, calling the Bishop’s seat in the Church as Bishop’s throne and the like have all contributed to the building up of a wrong image of the office of the Bishop. But now there has been a growing ecumenical consensus for restoring the servant image for the nature and function of the Bishop. Hans Kung in his book *THE CHURCH*, written mainly for the Roman Catholics, has a chapter on Ecclesiastical Office as Ministry. The first section of this chapter has the heading ‘Service as imitation of Christ’. He stresses the point that the word used in the New Testament for the ministry of the Church, namely, diakonia, meant the service of a menial servant which could not be associated with any secular type of honour or authority. Hans Kung says, ‘Diakonia means an activity which every Greek would recognise at once as being one of self abasement’. He goes on to say, ‘Jesus, however, gave this notion of service a radically new meaning; at the very heart of his eschatological message lies his commandment to love one’s neighbour, a love in which the love of God is manifested’.

In this context it is good to remember that the Church of South India began with a deliberate commitment to witness to the servant image of the Church and its ministry. The adoption of saffron colour for the Bishop’s stole, symbolising renunciation of worldliness was a departure from the traditional western use of the purple and red in the Bishop’s vestments. The first Moderator of the CSI, Bishop Hollis also took deliberate steps to remove from the Church the practice of addressing a Bishop as ‘my lord’. Bishop Hollis was fond of narrating his experience with one of his presbyters who found it difficult to give up his former Anglican tradition of addressing the Bishop as ‘my lord’. The Bishop decided to speak to him firmly, ‘How many times should I tell you not to address me any more as lord?’ The presbyter’s response was, ‘I am sorry my lord’. Don’t we all have our difficulties in getting rid of our traditions? But the initiative taken by the CSI under Bishop Hollis’ leadership did have an



impact and quite a number of our Bishops did not go back to purple and red in their vestments. Unfortunately, however, several of our Bishops have failed to understand the CSI commitment and have taken to the use of colourful vestments wanting to look like the Anglican and Roman Catholic Bishops. Along with the adoption of such symbols of episcopal status we have also reports of some of our Bishops exercising authoritarian rule associated with a secular type of status, authority, power, influence thus distorting the image of the episcopal office.

Secondly, Jesus' words 'As the Father has sent me' reminds us of our Lord's ministry as the good shepherd. In our Old Testament lesson prophet Ezekiel uses the figure of a shepherd and the sheep to describe the relationship between God and his people. Using this figure the prophet gives a graphic description of how God cares for his people because of his love. 'I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock when some of his sheep have been scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep; and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness . . . . I will feed them with good pasture . . . . I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down . . . . I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the crippled, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will watch over; I will feed them in justice'. Jesus' ministry makes more explicit the truth of the prophetic affirmation of God's loving care over his people. In John's Gospel Jesus describes himself as the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. Jesus ship to God. It is God who has sent him as the good shepherd and the goal of his mission is the gathering of all into one flock. He says, 'And I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd (John 10: 14-16). Here is a vision of the gathering of all people into one human community. The Gospel affirmation is that as God sent Jesus Christ as the good shepherd, Jesus Christ sends his chosen disciples with the same mission. This is the basis of the pastoral ministry of the Church. One of the important roles of the Bishop's office is the fulfilment of the pastoral ministry of the Church.

In the document on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry produced by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, which represents very significant ecumenical consensus among the churches, the function of the Bishop is described as follows: 'Bishops preach the Word, preside at sacraments, and administer discipline in such a way as to be representative pastoral ministers of oversight, continuity and unity in the Church. They have pastoral oversight of the area to which they are called. They serve the apostolicity and unity of the Church's teaching, worship and sacramental life. They have responsibility for leadership in the Church's mission. They relate the Christian community in their area to the wider Church and the universal Church to their community . . . . This means that of the different components of the functions of the Bishop those relating to pastoral care of the people are the most important. Certainly the pastoral ministry is taken care of by Presbyters, deacons and others in the diocese. But the oversight exercised by the Bishop is important for the quality of the pastoral care that individual members as well as communities experience as expressions of God's love.

In this regard also we need to avoid another distortion in the image of the Bishop. Because of the manifold responsibilities the dioceses give to the Bishop there has

been the danger of the Bishop being regarded as a super-administrator. In several of the CSI dioceses the Bishop is expected to chair too many committees and as a result he has very little time left for his pastoral functions. It is important to look at the different tasks from the perspective of Christ's mandate. Administration is certainly one of the components of the Bishop's office. But unless it is seen as needed for the pastoral care of the people it can distort the image and lead to a betrayal of the Gospel.

Leading people in worship and giving leadership in the mission of the Church are central to his ministry. Presiding at the Lord's Table and leading the people in worship is the focalpoint of the Bishop's office, because it is through this ministry the people are helped to participate in the victory of God over the powers of evil and darkness.

Even when being involved in the administration of funds and property and of people connected with the diocese, its congregations and institutions, the Bishop does not get away from the shepherding or the pastoral dimension of his ministry. All aspects of administration receive meaning only from the pastoral ministry through which people are helped to experience the love of Christ. Jesus' words 'As the Father has sent me' means that for the pastoral ministry the source of inspiration is always our Lord Jesus Christ, the manner in which he related himself to the people of his time, showed compassion to them and met their needs. Through the pastoral ministry with the celebration of the Lord's supper at the centre people are helped to receive the comfort and strength which comes from Jesus Christ. They are helped to live as disciples of Jesus. They key to pastoral ministry is the love of God and his concern for people and doing what God's love requires in the situations in which people are. There is a common assumption that the objective of the pastoral ministry is to keep people happy and contented, giving spiritual nourishment to their souls, bringing comfort and consolation in times of need, sickness, and sorrow and on the whole encouraging them to live a peaceful life in the world. Certainly all these are important parts of the pastoral care that the people need. But the image of the good shepherd Jesus has given in the Gospel teaches something more. Jesus speaks of the good shepherd leading the sheep out of the fold, the sheep following him and hearing his voice, and then bringing the sheep back into the fold. This means that the shepherding ministry involves the sheep in the mission of Christ. Pastoral ministry has the objective of involving the people in the Church's mission in the world. Every time that the people gather for worship they are sent out to go and be witnesses to Jesus Christ and his kingdom in the world. Pastoral care is related to this movement of people from the Church into the world and from the world into the Church. Pastoral care includes the comforting, counselling and encouraging ministry for those who get hurt or wounded in their involvement in Christ's mission in the world.

The Bishop's pastoral responsibility is over the whole diocese. He is the pastor of all the congregations and has to exercise the pastoral care for all the presbyters, deacons and others called to serve in the diocese under his oversight. But the rootage of the pastoral ministry is in a local congregation. It is one of the affirmations of the Congregational heritage that the local congregation is not just part of the Church but represents the whole universal Church in its place. It is important that this heritage is fully preserved in the CSI. Actually it is not just a Congregational tradition. One of the things I remember from my association with the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC is a statement made by a theologian



of the Russian Orthodox church, Fr. George Florovsky that for the Orthodox church the local congregation is the Universal Church in capsulised form. A Bishop's pastoral ministry will be meaningful only when it is rooted in the pastoral ministry of a local congregation. This, of course, will have practical difficulties. However, it is good to bear in mind that in the Catholic tradition when a person was elevated to the office of a Bishop, Archbishop or Pope, he did not cease to be priest or pastor of a local congregation. Because of the practical difficulties in the full exercise of pastoral duties along with the responsibilities of the new office, an Administrator is appointed for the congregation, who fulfills his obligation on behalf of the Bishop, Archbishop or Pope. It was when Pope John the 23rd took responsibility for his congregation seriously and started visiting the members in hospital and prison it became known that even as the Supreme Pontiff of the Church he functioned as the pastor of a congregation and this symbolised and gave new meaning to his role as the Pope.

Thirdly, God sent out Lord Christ for a mission of reconciliation, peace and unity. Apostle Paul says, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself' (II Cor. 5 : 19). In his letter to the Ephesians, the Apostle says, 'For he is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility' (Eph. 2 : 14). God is one and the world he created was meant to be one reflecting his oneness. Through sin the world and the human community became broken with many barriers of hostility and disunity. According to the testimony of the Gospels Jesus' ministry was directed to the removal of all barriers of separation and enmity. According to the Gospel of Luke, at the beginning of his ministry, Jesus quoted from the prophecy of Isaiah and announced that he had been commissioned by God to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, to give sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4 : 18-19). Jesus saw his ministry as practising the righteousness of God. According to the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus affirmed that his receiving the Baptism of John was what the righteousness of God required (Matt. 3 : 15). The whole ministry of Jesus was a demonstration of what God's righteousness and love meant and required. The Nazareth manifesto was an affirmation of how the commitment to his mission made known in his baptism was to be worked out. Witnessing to the love of God and his righteousness, Jesus sought to remove the barriers of separation among the people he came to serve. By touching those suffering from leprosy and declaring them clean he challenged the traditional attitude of the people. Similarly his ministry challenged the prejudices his people held about women, about people of other races such as the Samaritans, and about people of other faiths.

He deliberately kept the company of people despised as publicans and sinners. He was concerned with the wholeness of the human community from which no one should be excluded. His approach was not that of doing what the law required but doing what the love of God required. In his description of the good shepherd even one lost sheep had to be brought back to the fold. This was an affirmation of the radical inclusiveness of the mission of God which will not allow any barrier of separation. Those excluded are only those like the elder brother in the parable who exclude themselves because of their unwillingness to accept the inclusive forgiving love of God. 'As the Father has sent me even so I send you.' The mission which the Bishop's office

represents is Christ's mission of reconciliation, peace and unity.

Christ's mission of reconciliation, championing the cause of the marginalised and the neglected ones and seeking the removal of barriers of separation was a costly one. He had to pay with his life dying on the Cross. Paul says that it was through his death on the Cross that the reconciliation between the Jew and the Gentile was accomplished making then into one new humanity. He also describes what Christ did as abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances. For him it was love which fulfilled the law and love demanded the uniting of the Jew and the Gentile and indeed of all people into one humanity bound together by the bond of love.

Those who know themselves as sent by Christ even as God had sent Christ are also called to pay a price and share in Christ's suffering for the ministry of reconciliation, peace and unity. When I was in Brazil in 1980 for a conference of Third World Theologians one of the Latin American Bishops showed us the scars on his back of the wounds inflicted on him in prison because of the stand he had taken on behalf of the people against the injustices of the oppressive military regime.

From the early centuries of the Church's history the Bishop's office has been understood as the focus of unity of the Church. In a recent Anglican symposium on the Role and Task of the Bishop in Liturgy it is pointed out that in the teaching of several of the early Church Fathers like Ignatius, Irenaeus and Cyprian, the Bishop was the centre of unity in the local Church, the focus of the continuing apostolic teaching and mission and the link person between the local church and the Church universal. This is not to be taken as an abstract and theoretical concept. It is meant to be rooted in the reality of the struggle to overcome forces of disunity and to bring about a fellowship united in Christ.

We live in a world broken by many divisive forces. People are divided by language, race, caste, religion, class, the gap between the rich and the poor and many other factors. While in some situations people accept the status quo of glaring differences of quality of life between affluence and luxury for some and squalor and misery for others, in other situations people are involved in conflict and struggle for change often resulting in violence. In our country today we are aware of several violent conflicts such as in Punjab, Kashmir and Assam. Religion also is a divisive factor. The recent meeting of the National Integration Council also named religious fundamentalism as one of sources of disunity and violence.

The affirmation of the role of the Bishop as the focus or centre of unity has to be made in the context of the brokenness of the world crying for healing. One of the very significant insights of the modern ecumenical movement is that the unity of the Church is for the unity of humankind. The power of reconciliation known and experienced in the Church is to flow out into the world to bring healing, unity and peace.

But we know that the Church called to the ministry of reconciliation in the world is itself plagued with many divisive forces. Even within the Church we are divided by many factors, such as caste prejudices, pride of families, differences of theological interpretations, differences of

(Contd. on p. 18)



# WOMEN'S ISSUES

MRS. VATSALA SEBASTIAN, *Bangalore*

On the 4th and 5th of March, the Women's Forum of the Justice, Peace and integrity of Creation Convocation of the W.C.C. met in Seoul, South Korea.

Women from all over the world were there, representing their Churches and institutions.

On the 3rd evening, the Bando Youth Hostel, where all the ladies were accommodated was bubbling with life, laughter and the air was filled with warmth of friendship and sisterhood—each concerned about the other—the ones arrived earlier showing the rooms of the fresh arrivals—grouping near registration counter—collecting files and badges—the fervor of a World Conference began.

The Conference hall in the ground floor was ready in the morning with international exhibits of articles, poster, books and banners.

Women from different countries took part in leading the worship service—in songs, devotion, talk and prayer. The changing world of the women all over the world specially that of the Asian women—was reflected on very much during that time of worship, devotion and discussion. Skits, songs and poetry as per the talent of the participants were prepared, composed and shared among everyone. In the group discussion, we all shared our experiences of the plight of women in our respective countries.

Why are women in all countries, East or West treated as second class citizens?—only the degree and specificity of the problem and dealing may vary—other than that the treatment received by women all over is the same.

Though very clearly it could be seen that our Lord Jesus Christ has treated women with respect, been very considerate even with the women declared as sinners and prostitutes, the Christian society has not learnt any valuable model lesson exhibited by our Lord. If the Church is serious in following Jesus, then it should encourage and support all efforts towards inclusiveness and full humanity.

Jesus intended this full humanity for all, not just for men, or less for women. Men and women have the same human nature and are endowed with the same potentials for 'fullness'. Men do not image God more than women do. Yet patriarchy has distorted these truths to promote a hierarchical and complementary model of humanity, which puts women in second place.

Though Jesus had no women among the chosen twelve, the discipleship of women comes to the fore through their faith statements and presence during the time of the passion and the resurrection. In John 11:12 we see that Martha receives the knowledge of Jesus' life-giving power and profess her belief in him as the Christ. It was the women who stayed at his side when he was on the cross and who were the first witnesses to his resurrection, though they are not given credit for it. Women entered into faith in Jesus on exactly the same basis as the men who followed him. Both men and women need to work with equal fervour and devotion and exertion to become part of and share in the faith. The one thing necessary is commitment.

God created men and women to compliment each other. As individuals their capabilities may vary. Whether it is a man or a woman who is entrusted with any responsibility—home or outside institutions—it is the appli-

cation of talent, skill and knowledge that matters. Why discriminate the women—then as a second class citizen? If this partial treatment continues then women need to stand up and demand their rights.

At the Women's Forum, the magnificat was sung by everyone with a new understanding of praise to God and liberation of women in the Lord Jesus Christ. The magnificat is a rallying point for women and for all denominations to work together with the poor and the oppressed to overcome injustice. We believe in a new creation in which we all claim full humanness—which would help us to overcome economic and political oppression. The final statement given at Manila, even about 5 years ago stresses on the following points.

I quote, 'We, Asian church women, declare our strong solidarity with our oppressed people—the workers, the farmers, the fisherfolk, the urban poor, the tribal and ethnic minorities and most especially the women—in the painful struggle for full humanity.'

We denounce, foreign domination, state repression, militarism, dehumanizing capitalism and all forms of evil that subjugate women. We offer our collective strength and power to our Asian sisters in the fight against poverty and oppression. We are one in struggling for a democratization in the home, the Church, the Schools and society in general.

We will constantly exercise vigilance in upholding women's right to equality and self-determination; we will work unceasingly to lift our suffering sisters—the battered, the tortured, the hungry, the silenced, the unfree.

We firmly resolve to promote authentic feminist education and the development of a liberating theology from the perspective of Asian women. We strongly encourage new forms and ways of communication that will make us aware of issues that affect our lives and our fortunes.

We reach out and join hands with our sisters beyond our shores. Together we will rise from our bondage and heal wounds; together we will continue to hold up half the sky and move mountains.

We call for unity and solidarity, for it is only by working together toward a new community of women and men that the world will witness the coming of the New Kingdom which is the embodiment of justice, equality, peace and love.

The new generation of women—will certainly be able to witness the coming of the New Kingdom—

hence they sang—

She touches—she changes  
Everything she touches changes  
Touch is change—change is touch

She touches everything she changes  
Everything she touches changes  
Touch is change—change is touch.

We are women  
Everything we touch changes  
We are changers  
Everything we touch changes.

This could be the song of every liberated woman, Indian or otherwise.



# The Mission of the Church in India Conversion and Anti-Conversion Legislations

BISHOP SOLOMON DORAISAWMY, Bangalore

1. The Churches India are focusing the attention on the special Commission which the Risen Lord, empowered the Church with the gift of the Holy spirit. In the fulfilment of this call, evangelism is carried onto all castes, religion, Rural and Urban and Tribals in India. People now, more than ever before listen to the word of God and become Christians without any force or allure-ment. So the Christians in all status are increasing in number ; some states are even doubled and out-numbering the others. We can go through the list from Kanya-kumari Dt in the South to North-East India. The R.S.S. is agitating over this in many ways. They seems to be politically oriented that the Christians will dominate and India will be ruled by the Christians. Fortunately the Christian Church is not interested in the kingdom of the world, but only for the kingdom of God—The rule of God the Father, the whole world becoming the family of God. The converts in Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Nagaland are clear cases.

2. At present the B.J.P., in Madhya Pradesh is very much concerned about it 'Ever since the B.J.P., came to power, four months ago, both B.J.P., members, and the state's Christians had excepted some kind of concrete checks on missionary activities.' Only last month a senior member moved a resolution in the Assembly calling for immediate steps, to check conversions by foreign mis-sionaries by use of force or allure-ment. 'The Resolution had the full support of the Government.' Backing the motion, Chief Minister Sunderlal Patwa said 'Although a Law to check forcible conversion exists, Missionaries adopt notorious means to spread their Faith'. No one could quarrel with the resolution the way it was worded, seeking as it did to check conversions by 'Force or Allurement'. So it was no surprise that the resolution was passed unani-mously by the Assembly. It was a real threat to the missionary work. But Christians did not respond meekly. Indra Iyengar, who heads the M.P. Christian Association, sought permission from the President of India, to sue Patwa, 'for spreading hatred against Christians', Patwa accepting the challenge said, 'To meet him in the Court of the people instead of the Court of Law'. Indra Iyengar dashed a letter to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India, demanding protection from the threat held out by the Chief Minister (From *India Today*, August 15th 1990).

3. In this context, it is interesting to note that the two Districts of trial belt, Surguja and Raigarh have increased their Christian population between 1951-1981, from 545 to 28, 210 and from 14,145 to 1,44,000 respectively.

Though biologically the two Districts increased their population only by 100%, so the fight between the B.J.P., and Christians is obvious.

4. We must in this context reckon how the world Church and the Indian Church are growing.

(a) In the world in 2000 A.D., the Christian popu-

lation would be 20,19,921,366 millions, compared to the world population then would be 33%.

(b) In India, Christian population would be (2000 A.D.) 4,97,930 millions or 4.7% of the total population. Authority—Christian Encyclopedia, edited by David B. Barret, 1982).

It is indeed a phenomenal growth by the power of the Holy Spirit, within India, and the world. As people are drawn in to the Church Christians are proclaiming the word of God and the Churches are growing in number.

5. Please refer to the C.S.I., *Churchman* of July 1990, where the details of Church growth are given for, U.S.S.R., Afganistan, Thailand and Hungary. Also refer to the *Indian Church Growth* quarterly July-September, 1990, where it is given the Church growth in Africa, Bangladesh, China, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Nicaragua, Nepal, Rumania, South Korea and Sri Lanka.

I want to urge the readers to seriously consider three important facts prayerfully :

(a) The majority religious of this secular country of ours is surprised at the phenomenal growth of the Church and they are looking at the Church critically. But our faith is the Lord's Commission to go and proclaim the Good News to the entire world. The Lord told the disciples to go and make disciples'. The living word of the Kingdom of God must be proclaimed to the whole world. 'And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness, in to all Nations and then shall the end come' (St. Matt. 24 : 14). The end here means the day of judgement. The Church is enabling the proclamation as the power of the Holy Spirit is acting. We have no claim to make. It is God's doing. We must simply praise Him and be grateful for the Church growth in India and the world.

(b) The second thing I want to emphatically impress on the readers and the Church is, we should as the power filled people must share the word of God, not only by the word of mouth, but also by the selfless, sacrificial service to the suffering people in need through our love and action.

(c) Finally I want the C.S.I. and all the Christians in the Indian sub-continent, must act in an unified manner at the next census in 1991.

I feel that we are not mindful of the census figures. At the 1991 census we may be concerned about the 'Reser-vation' problem, but much more serious is the way we answer the questions of the enumerators as to the religion we belong to. There are religions like, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and Christianity. But if we say we are Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, Lutherans, the enumerators will only put us under, 'others', and we will not be included as Christians in the Census. You can imagine the consequences. Let us be unified in our thinking and act with Christian Solidarity, with concern for the correct census figures. May the Lord unify our action.



# Unity of the Church and Unity of Humanity

## 1. Asian Scene

The Church in Asia, much more perhaps than in any other part of the world, is set amidst people of God of diverse 'hues' and 'shades'. The variety of ethnic groups, languages, religions, faith-traditions, cultural expressions etc. are not only found spread across the continent but, in almost all cases, is also a reality within each of the boundaries of the modern nation-states that we have in Asia.

1.2. The pluralism that we have on the one hand offers a challenge to be in 'community', while on the other hand it presages a demand for recognition and for preservation of identity within that community life. The demand for recognition and identity is in the present times a phenomenon that has gained much momentum and which has found expression and support through various movements nationally, regionally and globally.

1.3. The Church and its concomitant Christian identity is never removed and isolated from the world it finds itself in. A discussion of '*Unity of the Church and Unity of Humanity*' must necessarily have as its starting point the existence of the Church in such a context of creative tension between 'community' and 'identity'. The many diversities and varieties above find expression also within and amongst the churches of Asia. This therefore demands that the churches address the issue of 'Unity' firstly within and amongst the Churches themselves.

1.4. The content and direction of 'ecumenism' in the specific context of Asia is a matter for serious study and reflection from within Asia. 'Unity' is not an easy or simplistic concept amidst such diversity. The quest for unity has to be seen anew in terms of not some supposed commonalities or 'uniformity' but in terms of working and building-up together using the given differences and heterogeneity. The demands for recognition and identity despite the commitment to 'unity' must be understood in relation to the reality of the struggle by the people of Asia for an authentic and full human community.

## 2. Unity Within and Between Churches

The Churches are called to be forerunners of the 'Kingdom of God' within themselves and in the situation they are. Their life and witness is not just to verbalise but also actualise this vision within themselves and without. Any aberration brought upon this Kingdom-vision by the practices and action of churches within and amongst themselves, brings to the fore questions on the integrity and credibility of the Church and the Gospel it preaches. The Churches—within and amongst themselves—have to take stock of the situation confess its failings and strive towards the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth.

2.2. Unity therefore calls for an understanding of our differences in a constructive way to recognize our roles as part of a whole in the design and purpose of God. In such light, our denominational differences, be they historical or theological, pale into shadow and our task as partners in the work and mission of God brightens our way together. The richness of diversity in much venture can be

appreciated and identities are not discarded or destroyed. Unity, if experienced this way does not therefore distort one's own identity. On the contrary it enhances and empowers communities to engage in action for the sake of the Kingdom.

2.3. The abuse and misuse of power and domination by some over others betrays the wholeness of unity within and amongst our churches. We have to come to grips with many 'excluding' aspects evident in our church communities. The breaking down (of walls) or breaking out (of boxes) is required to break 'barriers' to develop an inclusive attitude.

2.4. To be a faithful to unity the Churches must be sensitive to barriers of various kinds within themselves. Without such a realization the Churches cannot progress towards an inclusive community with space and recognition for the ministry of all. This envisaged inclusive fellowship will be a community of men, women, the children, the young, the old, the handicapped, the economically deprived and disadvantaged, the indigenous etc. in our churches. Participation and involvement in a true sense must be open and welcomed, particularly of women, youth, the physically handicapped and other marginalised in all levels of church activities including decision-making and leadership roles.

## 3. An Asian Christian Identity

The facts that Christianity is an Asian religion and that it had since the 1st century A.D. some roots in our soil, are often overlooked and ignored. Particularly in those countries of Asia with a colonial history, the Church (and Christian generally) are still looked upon as 'vestiges' of past colonial masters and often treated with suspicion and derision. Christians, especially where they are found associated with some covert design running contrary to the mainstream of Asian thought, aspirations and values. It is amidst these perceptions (right or wrong, apart) that the issues of '*Asianess of the Church*' or and '*Asian Christian Identity*' was to continue to be a serious search for the Church in Asia.

3.2. An 'Asian Christian' identity will have to draw its elements from the uniqueness and sickness of the cultural strength inherited from the major civilization which found a home in their part of the earth. It has also to include all shades of Christian presence that we have presently in Asia including the Roman Catholic and evangelical traditions. Such an identity should not be one that is removed as apart from the Asian society; it has to have its reference points within the struggles, hopes and aspirations of the people of Asia. It has to be one that is responsive to the changing realities in the geopolitical Asian arena while staying obedient and truthful to the Gospel and Christ.

3.3. Among historical and contemporary factors that prevent such an identity are the tie-ups and dependence (both financially and in terms of ecclesiastical structures) with 'parent' churches of the west, the adherence to models of church structures and operations similar to



western churches and which way not be appropriate in our situations the lack of a common comprehensive platform (organization) to bring the diverse forces of Asian Christians together, the absence of active participation by Christians from China in any of the existing Asian Christian or ecumenical forums, and more significantly in the present times, the rivalry, the name-calling, the exclusive-calls of the many mushrooming 'Christian sects' with their brand of the 'Gospel' (often suggested financially by similar minded groups from North America and Europe).

In such situations we find ourselves in confrontation and conflict with each other which has resulted in the erosion of strength and confidence of the Church and has sapped available energy and resources that could have been harnessed to bring about a united Asian Christian impact and witness in Asia.

3.4. A genuine and sensitive 'Asian Christian' identities as a manifestation of the Unity of the Church in Asia will contribute towards the quality and the strength of the larger Asian peoples identity. The Asian Christian identity (encompassing within itself various differences in creative tension) will in turn be a credible and authentic component of the larger Asian perspective and reality of unity amidst diversity.

#### 4.1. Inter-relatedness between unity of the Church, unity of humanity and unity of creation

The Church is not existent merely for itself and the concerns of its so-called members, in total isolation from the groans and travails of humanity and nature around it. The Church bears testimony to the common creator—God and therefore upholds the unity and oneness of the whole of humanity and creation renewed through the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The interrelatedness of the Unity of the Church, of humanity and the Creation is a significant insight in the contemporary ecumenical vision.

4.2. While we affirm the sacredness of human life and its distinct place in creation, the contemporary ecumenical vision mentioned above also draws our attention to the sacredness of nature created by God. It is necessary for Christians to recapture the true meaning of 'stewardship' which we are called to exercise as human beings. Construing this stewardship as 'ownership' and the excessive craving dictated by materialism should be halted immediately to avoid irreversible consequence to nature.

4.3. The respect and (almost) reverence for nature and creation among certain Asian faith—traditions and among practices of particularly indigenous communities in various parts of Asia are another of the conceptual resources available for the church to take stock of the ecological and environmental issues of the day. The devastation and wastage we see around only serves to fulfil the greed and desire for quick profit at various levels and at a total disregard for the basic needs, basic amenities, community and the well-being of the future generations. The Church must develop a theology with reference to this contextual resource to bear testimony to complementarity between humanity and creation overall, in the design of God, the creator of all things good and beautiful.

4.4. The Church will find itself in conflict with powers and principalities when it begins to engage in this manner. The 'security', wealth, institutions of the Church will be placed at risk. This may be the point at which the Church will be called to 'empty itself' and follow her Master and thereby witness to the fulfilment of all things in Christ.

#### 5. Recommendations for Churches, National Councils and CCA

(a) Care and concern for the deprived and disadvantaged and for children and the aged (particularly as urbanization and industrialization increasingly undermines the 'family unit' as understood in the Asian context) must engage the Churches, NCC's and the CCA in special ministries in this areas.

(b) Recognizing the existing disparities between urban and rural (including indigenous) communities, economically deprived and wealthier nations, sharing of material and human resources between Asian Churches must be enhanced and be premised on terms of true partnership at all levels. Concerned programme committees of CCA and NCC's should give attention to this aspect of ministry.

(c) In order to add momentum to unity of Churches, CCA should consider declaring a 'Decade of Church Unity in Asia' and undertake appropriate programmes.

(d) The Churches should encourage the physically handicapped persons to take up theological and other relevant training and involve them in the ministry of the churches. The physical facilities in the worship places and training institutions should be appropriate to enable accessibility for the participation of the handicapped.

(e) The Churches should give attention to their worship and liturgical programmes and incorporate appropriate local cultural elements and practices. Such attempts will help the worship atmosphere in the churches and will help in discarding the misunderstanding that churches are vestiges of Western interests.

(f) We request the CCA and the NCC's in our region to get in touch with churches overseas and inform them the difficulties faced by the Asian churches by the constantly emerging sects and support given to such sects and dissenting groups by the Christians from overseas. Wherever possible, the overseas churches be requested to convince the Christians there not to venture into Christian/Church activities without prior consultation and participation with churches in the respective countries in Asia.

(g) There should be more church to church contacts between Asian churches and churches in other parts of the world. The missionary societies and boards overseas which are hitherto playing such a role (bringing churches together) should evaluate their involvement in the Asian churches.

(h) Difficulties in securing visas for attending religious meetings, theological training has hindered free movements of Christians in Asia. The CCA should look into this problem and raise this issue with related governmental authorities and aim towards free movements of people of Asia within Asia without visa requirements.

(i) Asian Christian fellowship and identity is incomplete till the Chinese and other Protestant Christians (who are not present with us), the Roman Catholic church and the Evangelical Christian communities, take fuller participation within the ecumenical fellowship of Asia. The CCA should work towards such a fuller Christian fellowship in Asia.

(j) In terms of the unity of the whole creation, the churches and CCA draw up a programme on ecological education (including Bible Studies) with recommendations for local implementation. Latest information and data in this regard may be made available to all churches.



## Malankara Church Controversy Ends

In a significant judgement the Kerala High Court on June 1 put an end to the century-old differences in the Malankara Orthodox (Jacobite) Syrian Church with the declaration that there is only one Malankara Church which is part of the World Orthodox Syrian Church headed by the Patriarch of Antioch.

A Division Bench comprising Mr. Justice U. L. Bhatt and Mr. Justice K. P. Balanarayana Marar set aside the earlier finding of Mr. Justice Chandrasekhara Menon in what is known as the 'Church case', and held that the Malankara Church was not an auto-cephalous Church, independent of the Antiochian See, but part of the World Orthodox Syrian Church.

The court observed that while the Patriarch of Antioch is the head of the World Church, the Catholicos of the East is the head of the Malankara Church.

Disposing six appeals filed by the Catholicos faction against the 1980 judgement of Mr. Justice Chandrasekhara Menon, the Division Bench said the relationship between the Patriarch and the Malankara Church was governed by the 1934 constitution of the Malankara Association which was binding on the community as a whole.

The court found that the Catholicate of the East was validly established in Malankara (the land of Malayalam) by patriarch Abdul Messiah by his Kalpana (order) issued in 1912.

Describing it as a great act of statemanship on the part of the Patriarch, the court said that process of decentralization had nipped in the bud and established a degree of peace and reconciliation in the Malankara Church.

However, the Court rejected the contention of the Catholicos faction that the spiritual power of the Patriarch was reduced to a vanishing point with the establishment of the Catholicate.

The present rift in the Malankara Church arose with the Patriarch declaring the Catholicos and his followers as heretics at the Universal Synod at Damascus in 1975 and ordaining a rival Catholicos.

The court said dissensions arose in spite of the 1959 decision of the Supreme Court which heralded a unifying era wherein the Patriarch had accepted the Catholicos and the latter accepted the former, subject to the provisions of the Constitution.

The Court said the patriarch group, which had accepted the authority of the Catholicos-cum-metropolitan of the Malankara Church and the binding nature of its Constitution, could not go back now.

The court held that the metropolitans ordained by the Patriarch, disregarding the authority of the Catholicos, could not be regarded as lawfully ordained metropolitans in the eyes of the law. They cannot function in such capacity in the Malankara Church or its dioceses or parishes.

A significant aspect of the judgement is the declaration that the administration of the properties of the parishes and parish churches does not vest in the metropolitan but in the parish assemblies and the trustees. The administration of the properties of the diocese will vest in the diocesan metropolitans, the court said.

## Bishop pleads for Erection of Monument for Portuguese Missionaries

Bishop Joseph Kureethara of Cochin pleaded to the Government to construct a monument in memory of the Portuguese Missionaries in recognition of their outstanding service to the development of Indian art, culture and education.

He was speaking at a meeting held at the bishop's house on the occasion of the commencement of the 500th anniversary of the Vasco da Gama's arrival on May 22.

Mr. K. L. Bernad, K.G. Joseph, Mr. Stanley Fernandes, advocate, P. G. Jacob, P. J. Vincent spoke on the occasion.

Before commencing the meeting, the members paid floral tribute at the tomb of Vasco da Gama at St. Francis Church Fort Cochin.

The Portuguese Admiral Vasco da Gama landed in Kerala in 1498 and he was followed by Cabral. Cabral and some Christians who were converted in Calicut reached Cochin where the king gave them a cordial reception.

They started the work of evangelisation in Cochin and other areas. When Cabral returned to Portugal, Joao da Nova along with four Franciscans came to India. Gama visited Cochin in 1502, and was followed by Alfonso and Albuquerque. A fortress was built in Cochin in 1505, and Cochin became the seat of the Portuguese viceroy from 1505 to 1530 when it was shifted to Goa. St. Francis Xavier arrived in 1542.

The Portuguese who had political, economic and religious motives played significant role in the Kerala culture. The priests who included in the contingent were not only engaged in religious instruction but also in the field of education and social service.

The Portuguese missionaries fought against the evil practices of untouchability and other social evils. The Synod of Diamper (Udayamperur) on June 20-26, 1599 took many decisions against the feudal set up. The Synod prohibited polygamy, child marriage and slavery then existent in the society.

The churches and educational institutions established by Missionaries were great centres of social change and cultural transformations.

The most literate state in the country, Kerala owe much to the European missionaries and educational institutions run by the Christians.



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## Revd. Noel S. Sen

*New General Secretary of the Church of North India.*

The Revd. Noel S. Sen has been appointed as the new General Secretary of the CNI Synod with effect from 1 June, 1990.

Noel Sushil Sen B.A., B.D., has been serving the Diocese of Calcutta as the Presbyter in charge of St. Paul's Cathedral, Calcutta, and as the Diocesan Secretary. Prior to this he has had the opportunity of being the Presbyter in charge of numerous other churches in Calcutta like St. Thomas Church, St. Andrew's Church, St. John's Church and St. Stephen's Church.

Born in Shimla (1939), he graduated from the prestigious St. Xavier's College, Calcutta and made his debut in theology by qualifying from Bishop's College, Calcutta.

Revd. Noel Sen has a string of qualifications to his credit and has a vast store of experience. He has served the Church from 1972 in various capacities and is a member of numerous committees and institutions. Prominent among his noteworthy contributions are, his assignments as the Bishop's Chaplain from 1976 to 1982, as a member of the CNI Law and Procedure Committee, member of the CNI Synod's Executive Committee, member of Committee of Management, CNITA, member National Christian Council of India, Unit I, and is the Moderator's nominee on the Board of Management, Bishop's College, Calcutta.

In 1989, he was the CNI representative at the World Council of Churches in San Antonio, Texas, U.S.A. He has also participated in Operation Faith share in 1982, and is scheduled to represent CNI at the Anglican Consultative Council, Cardiff U.K. this year.

Revd. Noel Sen is a bachelor, with a passion for music and was a special student at the Yale School of Music. An accomplished pianist he has to his credit several recitals and has performed frequently over the All India Radio.

(Contd. from p. 12)

approach to the aspirations of dalits and others, the claims made by different charismatic groups and the responses to such groups. With the Bishop as the centre of unity the diocese has a mission to overcome these sources of disunity. It was through the cleansing of the temple that Jesus demonstrated his mission. It is good to discern what kind of cleansing we need in our Church and in this diocese today so that this diocese served by Sam Amirtham may have a renewed experience of participation in Christ's mission of reconciliation and unity.

The movement from the Church into the world through different programmes of service to society and the involvement of some members in the political life of the state and the nation is one in which this diocese has had a very good record. Bishop Jesudason has given good guidance to the lay people as well as to the clergy in this regard. But more can be done, bearing in mind the many areas of disunity in our religious, social, economic and political life where we are called to witness to the mission of Jesus Christ.

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### THE REV. J. J. PRATT

*The Rev. J. J. Pratt, a missionary from the London Missionary Society, has retired and gone back to England after 29 years of dedicated service in the Church of South India. After graduating from University College, London in French and from Mansfield College, Oxford, in Theology he spent two terms at St. Andrew's College, Selly Oak, Birmingham preparing for his missionary career, before coming to India in 1961. He was ordained in the Rayalseema Diocese in the same year by Bishop Sumitra, the former Moderator. After serving as Divisional Chairman in Cuddapah District and in Anantapur for several years he moved to St. John's Church, Vellore in 1974. He also served at various times as Acting Dean of the Chaplaincy Department of the Christian Medical College and Hospital, especially from 1987 to 1990.*

*We place on record the gratitude of the Church for the services of this man of God. His address is : 50, North Road, Hoddesdon, Herts, EN 11 8JQ, U.K.*

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(b) Homiletics

(c) Christian Education

— 2 years

2. Postgraduate Research Diploma of the College

— 1 year

3. Research Fellowship (Niles Scholarship)

— 1 year

## GRADUATE STUDIES

1. Bachelor of Divinity Course (B.D.) Degree

— 3½ years

2. Bachelor of Religious Education (B.R.E.)

— 2 years

3. Diploma in Religious Knowledge (D.R.K.)

— 1 year

4. Diploma in Proficiency in Counselling

— 10 months

Applications should reach the Principal by 15th December, 1990 (Graduate Studies), 15th January 1991 (Postgraduate studies).

Limited scholarships are available for all the courses.

Two scholarships are set apart every year for WOMEN.

Application forms are available with the Registrar on payment of Rs. 10. Kindly address all enquiries to :

THE REGISTRAR

United Theological College

Post Box No. 4613

63 (Old No. 17), Miller's Road

BANGALORE—560 046.



# Leonard Theological College

*(Affiliated to the Senate of Serampore College)*

## 1991-92 Academic Year

Courses beginning in June 1991 :

1. 5 year Integrated B.D. for candidates with Pre-University of equivalent academic qualifications.
2. 4 year B.D. for candidates with the minimum academic qualifications of B.A./B.Sc./B.Com. or equivalent.
3. B.Th. holders in first or second class +2 English qualifying papers + 1 year's experience in some area of the church's ministry are required to pass (during the two year residential period) in 16 papers + thesis (or 18 papers).  
  
B.Th. holders in Third class + qualifying examinations + at least one year's experience in some area of the church's ministry are required to complete the entire B.D. course as prescribed by the Senate. The qualifying examinations are conducted by the Senate.
4. 2 year certificate course in Religious Education for candidates with Pre-University or equivalent academic qualifications.
5. Certificate course for Church Workers (for MCI Deaconesses and non-ordained ministry)

Research projects may be undertaken through the School of Research.

Applications for any of the above-mentioned courses should reach the Registrar on or before 31st January 1991. Prospectus, including necessary application forms, are available from the Registrar's Office on payment of Rs. 10. Direct all enquiries with regard to admission to :

THE REGISTRAR,

Leonard Theological College,

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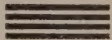
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